

CLUB

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22,000 square feet of enlightenment

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Welcome to utopia.

By Justin Hampton

If global dance music is a religion, the entire edifice of 540 Howard Street in San Francisco is one of its oldest and most celebrated shrines. Starting in 1984, the building was DV8, a sprawling nightclub run by infamous Bay Area restaurateur and eccentric Lawrence "Dr. Winkie" Lin. DV8 closed in 2000, reportedly because of permit issues with the city.

Building a venue named Temple in this location seems like the only respectful thing to do, and new owner Paul Hemming and his team are prepared for the challenge. Aaron Parrish, Temple's director of entertainment and marketing, sums it up: "This is the only megaclub built from the artist's perspective. It was built by a guy [Hemming] who is both a music producer and a DJ, and it flowed from the love of the music."

The team's plan for the space – which they'll roll out gradually due to its mammoth, even utopian, ambition – will give both artist and clubgoer more than enough bang for their buck. Within the building's 22,000 square feet, Temple will offer four rooms over two floors, each outfitted with its own Martin Audio sound system, LED and intelligent lighting, and video displays.

Temple of Boom: Martin F12 two-ways deck the Catacombs dancefloor.



Then there's Prana, an in-house Indian restaurant helmed by chef Jamie Lauren, with original drinks concocted by beverage manager Alison Harper. Hemming also plans to move his dance music record store Zen City into the building, and convert it into a digital download café complete with recording, film and editing studios; and facilities on the second floor for visiting artists to create and premiere

work to the Temple audiences. Oh, and that's not even counting an extensive private collection of Hindu antiquities and a vintage, mirror-walled "Mercury Room" lounge that any Rat Pack acolyte would be proud to pass out in.

So you'd best believe that entertainment director Jamal "DJ Mal" Abdo means it when he says, "The whole philosophy is always growing, never stagnant. We think o

ourselves as like this young idea that's now birthed into a solid foundation, and that by the end we'll hopefully have erected the full Temple."

Aesthetes' Defeat

Such a sweeping vision is indeed a tall order for any designer or systems installer or club owner, especially one starting virtually from scratch (Parrish says the space was virtually gutted when they took command of it in 2005). The initial design was carried out by Abdo, Hemming and general manager Matt Eastling. Both Abdo and Hemming had worked within clubs as DJs, and had very specific visions for the club. So while the team members have respect for superclubs such as Fabric, Ministry Of Sound and Pacha (and hopes to establish joint ventures with these brands for future events), they wanted to make their club different.

So they employed a few different philosophies from the beginning. For one, they installed the sound system first, and then worked on interior design. "This is definitely one of the very few venues in my experience that [did that]," declares Abdo. "In this neck of the woods, it seems to constantly be, 'Well, we'll make this place gorgeous and then we'll put in the sound,' and then the sound suffers as a consequence."

The club decided to go with Martin Audio Blackline series speakers, and handed over the project to Ryan Hanslip, who inaugurated his recently formed company Commercial Systems Design (commercialsystemsdesign.com) with this flagship install. Hanslip was already familiar with Martin through his former position as installations manager for local firm JK Sound, and took the job with great enthusiasm. "It was a great twist of fate, because I had stumbled into a room filled with Martin Audio palette stacks, [and] I was able to play with it like a bunch of Legos," he says.

Shake + Roll (No Rattle)

Yet each area presented its own set of acoustical problems. In the first floor's Shrine Room (which houses Prana during non-club hours), as well as in the basement's Destiny Lounge and Catacombs, a series of pillars created a series of reflection headaches, so placement was key in each case. "This place, with the physics involved, does not lend itself to a typical set-up with front stacks and back



From left: Audio designer/installer Ryan Hanslip, owner Paul Hemming and general manager Matt Eastling



stacks," says Abdo of Shrine in particular. So they tried something unconventional, at Martin Audio's suggestion. "When we flew the vertical H3H [three-ways], we turned all the horns, actually stacked them to get the splay to go horn-wide 70 percent, so no matter where you walk in the venue, you have full coverage," says Abdo. "You can stand behind any one of

these pillars in this room and you don't lose sound at all. You don't lose any clarity, you don't get any reflection. There's no noise. Everything is really clear and fine, and it's time-aligned to the sub at the back of the room, so everything fires at the same time. That was one of the ideas behind flying the system: to keep the acoustics from being in your face."

Downstairs, the futuristic Destiny Lounge has a smaller system, but it's no less powerful. The F10 rotatable-horn two-ways, mounted onto the ceiling with OmniMount ceiling mounts, dominate here as tops, and are arranged in a four-corner mirror right in front of the DJ booth, which is supplied with two ultra-compact F8 two-ways for monitors. The sound, similar to the set up in Shrine, is focused on the floor to allow a perimeter of quiet for patrons seated on the Italian leather sofas on the wall. And, adds Hanslip,



"all these different sets of speakers are delayed so that the sound reaches the center point right at the same moment. The subs are hidden in the corners, and the way the room's shaped creates a nice sweet spot with the bass as well, right in the middle of the dancefloor. So with the delays set, you can walk around the room and you don't hear something earlier here and something later there."

Right next door to the Destiny Lounge is the Catacombs, the same room that housed the first incarnation of the Spundae party during the DV8 days. "This room [has] sound that's gonna make your clothing shake," warns Parrish, and he's not kidding. The bass alone, provided by two Martin subs and two 18-inch horn-loaded line array woofers, placed on either side of the DJ booth in front of the dancefloor, provides an earth-shattering rumble in keeping with the room's subterranean décor. The F12 two-ways take care of the rest. "We chose to go for a stereo sound in a four-corner configuration," explains Hanslip. "That's why there are two speakers in each corner back-to-back, so we could put eight speakers in here and create two stereo sources. We have the left signal being sent to the front left and the rear right. And since this isn't going to be a live room typically, panning will follow that. But more importantly, whichever way you look or listen, you're hearing the music in stereo."

This is also where Eastling's future-forward Studio Booth resides, which is just what it sounds like: a DJ booth with a fully integrated studio. "We hope to utilize the Studio Booth for community enrichment in the form of clinics and studio time for those who want to learn and create," says Eastling. "It's a marquee aspect of Temple, and [represents] our values."

Video Paintings

Of course, clubs are supposed to be seen as well as heard, so Temple plans to push the visual envelope as well. Shrine boasts white Italian leather banquettes on wheels (for maximum mutability). Eastling, who spearheaded the video design, brought in weather balloons and stretch Lycra to serve as projection surfaces. The VJ has his own booth flanking the room's 143-square-foot stage, and controls an

Edirol V-4 mixer connected to an Apple G5 running MotionDive, and a proprietary video painting software program. This system is also connected to G5s in the basement, which disperse the video feed to the 35 televisions within the Destiny

Hindu antiques preside over Martin-enforced festivities in the Shrine Room.



Lounge, as well as the two 18-inch plasma screens next to the DJ booth in the Catacombs. The club emphasizes the visuals over lights, but does make room for dancefloor lighting from Martin Professional: including MAC 250 Entour fixtures and MX-1 scanners in the Shrine.

Downstairs in the Destiny Lounge, the DJ can control the room's "TV halo" (35 individual 13-inch monitors) and range of AVR LED fixtures with a Sunlight DMX control system. A four-foot "LED EQ" beat monitor rises and falls in time to the music.

The Catacombs's visuals are more minimal, but feature the glow of LED light: 120 feet of Color Kinetics iColor Fresco linear cove lighting, and LED-fitted "pARTitions," conceived and named by Eastling. These are movable five-foot light walls, embedded with two AVR LUS12's, with switch-able graphic cartridges at the top. They can also project logos — great for corporate events. Catacombs also

Sound directed to the floor in The Destiny Lounge allows for quiet carousing in the sitting area.



features two 50-inch plasmas hanging above the subwoofers, and muted red spots for area lighting.

Not unlike the sound systems, the DJ booths were also carefully thought out. Each one is outfitted with an Allen & Heath Xone:92 mixer, chosen for the quality of its filters and pre-amps, two Pioneer CDJ-1000s and two Technics 1200 turntables. Hanslip created a custom I/O console for each system, made from components sold separately by Middle Atlantic Products, which allows DJs to plug in any additional hardware or laptop-based software such as Ableton Live or Final Scratch, without having to unplug something valuable.

Sound for now is basically controlled by the DJ, though there will be a soundman on hand to watch out for problems, and the volumes Allen & Heath mixers have already been spayed by Abdo to avoid red-lining. When it's time to close up shop, a simple turn of the key on the club's Furman ASD-120 power distributor turns off each room's system sequentially, to avoid speaker-destroying mistakes.

"It's a lot to take on at once, so we're doing it step-by-step," says Abdo. "I don't expect this space to ever be complete to our vision. But it's like every step [we take], we get one step closer."

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